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Inside information for comic dealers and collectors!

#2

April, 1994

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- PRIME#2: AGAIN WITH #10?
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The man...
The legend...

The King.

Jack Kirby
1917-1994

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VANTAGE
PRESS RELEASE REVIEW
Inside information for comic dealers and collectors!
#2

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If you know anything about poetry please, please don't read this.

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Special thanks to our advisors

Vantage: Press Release Review.
Volume One, Number Two, April 1994

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PUBLISHER

You would not believe what it was like trying to get our first issue out with such severe weather conditions around the nation. Vantage was in a special pickle because some of our staff members live around the country.

Good ol' Vantage HQ was under more snow than the highest peak in Latveria, and temperatures were at a record-breaking seventy below! Phone lines were down! Overnight mail seemed to enter the twilight zone and regular mail service pretty much was dead in the water!

Getting out a new first issue with nothing in the past to go on is rough enough. But we did it and we did it well. I'd like to thank the whole Vantage team (you'll find 'em under the word "staff" on the contents page) for doing a truly professional job during a difficult time!

For you new readers out there, let me welcome you to the wonderful world of Vantage. This is the world where: (1) We tell it like it is, (2) We make "for-real" picks, and (3) We get downright silly doing it.

This month we have some great picks and mmmm, are they delicious! My personal favorite is WildC.A.T.S. #10 and some of those non-sports picks are REAL WINNERS!

This is your one-stop shop for exclusive, inside information and analysis. Check out our cool press releases section in back to feast your eyes on stuff that few collectors get to see!

Watch these pages as Vantage continues to get even better with time . . . just wait 'til you see what we've got cookin' for Vantage: Press Release Review #1000 in April!

—Rob Golub

Top Investment Picks of the Month

Collector's Sportslook #6 (Wizard Press)
(see Non-Sports Predictions section)
Prophet #5-up (Image/Extreme)

More Vantage Investment Picks

Beasties #1 (Axis)
Conan The Adventurer #1 (Marvel)
Dreadstar #1 (Malibu/Bravura)
Madman #1 (Dark Horse)
Prime #10 (Malibu/Ultraverse)
Robin #7 (DC)
Valor #12-20 (DC)
WildC.A.T.S. #10 (Image/Homage)

"The above pick list is a guide based on research, advisors' opinions, and staff opinions — keep in mind that even the experts will disagree. Comics can lose value after months or years. You would be wise to trade or sell books before they lose value. Read over the facts and opinions in Vantage, examine the pick list, and then make your own investment decisions. Remember: 1) There's no sure thing. Never bet the farm on any one book. 2) It may be fun to play the market, but comics are even more fun to read! Open up one of those sealed polybags and give comics a try!"

- Publisher Rob Golub

VANTAGE INVESTMENT PICK

Watch for the Vantage Star indicating our top picks!

Correction:

Last issue Vantage stated that Malibu planned to release a 99¢ comic titled "Jump On Now #1." It has instead been released as "Ultraverse Origins #1." As we originally reported, the direct market version is a top pick—it has a Joe Quesada gatefold cover.

DID THIS GUY GET EVEN BETTER OR IS IT JUST US?

Hubba-hubba. Check out this artwork. If you were impressed by **Moon Knight** it seems pretty clear that **Prophet** is gonna totally blow you away.

See, this artwork is by newcomer Stephen Platt who made an overnight name for himself by doing a bang-up job on the last few issues of **Moon Knight**. Platt has left Marvel and **Moon Knight** for Image Comics.

Actually, he's at Extreme Studios — Image is really nothing more than a front for a bunch of different creator-owned companies, and Extreme is the one that's owned by Rob Liefeld.

Does Platt plan on sticking with **Prophet** and Image? If he doesn't stick around the whole **Prophet** thing could fizzle before it gets started. Well, let's put it this way . . . Canadian Platt has informed **Vantage** that he is making plans right now to move to California, home of Image and Extreme Studios.

"There WILL be fire, though, because this thing is going to be hot."

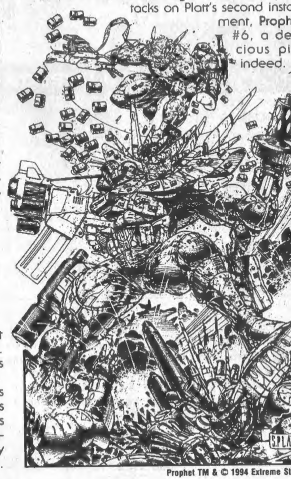
As we mentioned last issue, Platt's stint on the title is going largely unpublicized . . . no "spotlights" or "pick hits" . . . no fireworks or brass band.

There WILL be fire, though, because this thing is going to be hot. **Vantage** expects **Prophet** #5 and this month's #6 to burn holes in the racks. Extreme studios has a real winner here and **Vantage** believes that many advance-orderers may have missed this one.

See, two months before a comic come out all of the stores and dealers place orde for how many they want. That's how com companies (and Vantage!) decide wha quantity to print — by looking at the numbe of advance- orders they get. Why print mo than what people order? You'd just have t throw the other stuff away.

So if you can predict advance-orders yo can pretty much predict what supply is o there. After that you apply the basic prin ples of economics, a dash of inside inf some expert research, and there you have — the recipe for a **Vantage** pick. "Can cook or can I cook?" (Who said that whi looking at brand new foliage in space? Giant Nothing to whoever gets it.)

Anyway, now that you have yo investor's GED, we 'd like to make the co Two points for Extreme Studios. Last mon we made **Prophet** #5, the first Platt c **Prophet**, one of our Top Picks of the Mont This month our **Vantage** team of expe racks on Platt's second insta ment, **Proph** #6, a de cious pl indeed.



Prophet TM & © 1994 Extreme St

ADVANCE ORDERERS DIDN'T KNOW!!

PRIME FLIPS OUT & GOES ROGUE!!

According to sources close to Malibu Comics, Prime, the most popular character in the Ultraverse, is about to flip out. This will occur in **Prime** #10.

Just in case you missed our rather obvious headline we'll spell it out for you . . . advance-orderers were not aware of **Prime** #10's importance. In fact, this little book is going to arrive in stores with a neat little surprise: Prime Rogue!

That's right, Prime's going to be covered with black leather, long hair, and a serious scar, with a whole new body and costume. Stand back, Punisher. Kevin (Prime) is about to get nasty.

Since Prime is one of the most popular heroes around today, and back-issue prices continue to rise, this book could do very nicely.

Our hero undergoes these changes in **Prime** #10 because Prime is merely a a representation of what goes on in Kevin's teenage mind. It seems likely that regular Prime readers will pick up two or three copies of this book at the shops and that some Prime readers will then be forced to search for this one at the shows. This is a book that could go up.

Prime TM & © 1994 Malibu Comics Entertainment Group

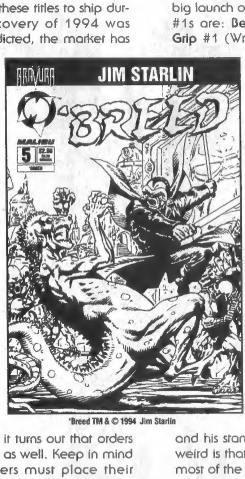
CREATOR OWNED PROJECTS:

WAVE OF THE FUTURE IS HERE!

As we predicted, in the wake of 1993 contractions, the market has temporarily turned towards comics with greater perceived stability — those of established comic publishers and established comic creators.

'Breed

One of the first of these titles to ship during the ongoing recovery of 1994 was **'Breed #1**. As we predicted, the market has responded favorably, with **'Breed** #1 already going for more than cover in some areas. **'Breed** is the new creator-owned book from interstellar guru Jim Starlin. Jim is famous for stuff like Warlock, Infinity Gauntlet, and the Silver Surfer — if you're into huge space epics, Jim Starlin is your man. While **'Breed** has many science fiction elements in it, it is a more earthly story of a demon on our planet.



'Breed TM & © 1994 Jim Starlin

Since there has been nice surge in demand for **'Breed** and the orders for #1 turned out to be low, it turns out that orders for #2-4 could be low as well. Keep in mind that advance-orderers must place their orders for #1-4 before these books even come out or have a chance to prove there salability. There are many famous #2s, #3s, and #4s in comics that gained considerable value simply because advance-orderers placed low orders and the quantity printed was therefore low. Examples: **Ghost Rider #4, Prime #2, Youngblood #2**, etc. Will **'Breed #2**, #3, or #4 be next?

Beasties

Also noteworthy is **Beasties** #1 from Axi Comics. Axis is a low profile publisher wit some big names behind it. Todd Johnson artist on **Tribe** from Image Comics, brok away from Image to start Axis. Although he already published a few issues of **Tribe** unde the Axis banner, this month is the company big launch of titles from other artists. The nev #1s are: **Beasties** #1 (see below), **Deat Grip** #1 (Writer Beau Smith, Green Lanter Corps Quarterly), **W** #1 (Bria McDonald & Brian O'Connell).

It is **Beasties** #1 that ho caught our eye, for it's by Javie Saltares, one of the mos under-rated artists in comics Javier was the penciler o **Ghost Rider** a couple years ag when **Ghost Rider** was TH hottest thing in the marke **Ghost Rider** was ALL that an one wanted at the show (**Vantage** remembers peopl picking up $20 **Ghost Ride** while ignoring the pile of $ **Magnus** #1s at the same sho table . . . that's comics).

Here's the real irony - **Ghost Rider** was largely ho due to the dark, gritty, fine drawn artwork, penciled b Javier Saltares and inked b Mark Texiera! Even thoug Javier was the penciler, Te seemed to get all the cred and his standing as an artist took off. Wha weird is that its usually the penciler who ge most of the credit, not the inker! After all, th penciler draws the thing and the inker bas cally traces it — if the penciler is no goo you can count on ugly pages. A few exam ples of teams where the penciler is the on the market focuses on:

Silver Age **Fantastic Four:** Jack Kirby (penc er)/Dick Ayers(inker)
Moon Knight #55: Stephen Platt (penciler

CREATOR OWNED (continued)

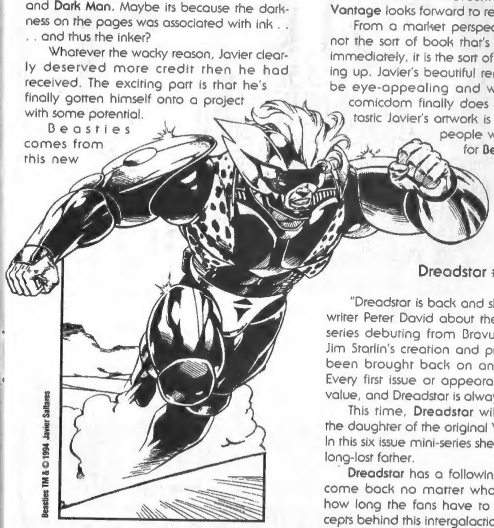
Chris Ivy, Al Vey, Scott Kolbish (inkers)
Various covers: Joe Quesada (penciler)/ Jimmy Palmiotti (inker)
Various Image titles: Rob Liefeld (penciler)/ Brian Murray (inker)

As you can see, the pencilers' names are more recognizable and Javier got the short end of the stick. Why? Maybe because "Tex" for Texiera is cool and easy to remember. Maybe it's because Javier took a break from comics for a year after **Ghost Rider** and then did only low profile titles like Marvel's **Night Thrasher** and **Dark Man**. Maybe its because the darkness on the pages was associated with ink . . . and thus the inker?

Whatever the wacky reason, Javier clearly deserved more credit then he had received. The exciting part is that he's finally gotten himself onto a project with some potential.

Beasties comes from this new upstart Image-style company with what's sure to be a nice low run. Since Javier OWNS the Beasties characters, he's been giving this project his all—having spent the past year working on it—acting as penciler, inker, and writer. Javier told **Vantage** that Beasties "takes place in the near future," and involves crime-fighting, terrorism, and political drama at a time when the world stands at the brink of uniting under one central government. It sounds like an interesting concept and **Vantage** looks forward to reading it.

From a market perspective, while this is not the sort of book that's likely to take off immediately, it is the sort of book worth picking up. Javier's beautiful rendering is sure to be eye-appealing and when the rest of comicdom finally does realize how fantastic Javier's artwork is you can be sure people will start searching for **Beasties** #1.



Dreadstar #1

"Dreadstar is back and she's pissed," says writer Peter David about the new **Dreadstar** series debuting from Bravura. **Dreadstar** is Jim Starlin's creation and property and has been brought back on and off for years. Every first issue or appearance has gained value, and Dreadstar is always a great read.

This time, **Dreadstar** will be a female, the daughter of the original Vanth Dreadstar. In this six issue mini-series she searches for her long-lost father.

Dreadstar has a following that seems to come back no matter who publishes it or how long the fans have to wait. The concepts behind this intergalactic adventure story

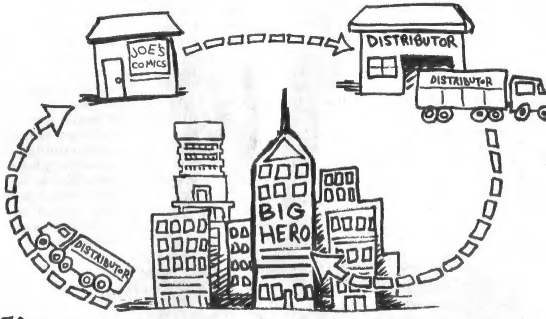
The Comic Book Market

How It All Works

A Vantage Guide

1) Joe's sends in an order for 50 ***Big Hero*** #1's.

2) Order received by distributor.



5) Big Hero sends to stores what was ordered.

4) Big Hero gets the order and prints about as many as stores, dealers, and some collectors have ordered in advance (back at step 1)

3) Distributor tells publishe how many to print.

Joe's pretty experienced and chances are he ordered what he needed but if he was not told that ***Big Hero*** #1 featured the first appearence of *Big Heroine*, he could have too few copies, and demand could go up!

VANTAGE

CREATOR OWNED (continued)

have universal appeal and are Starlin at his best. **Vantage** has no doubt that Perer David, an excellent writer, will do the Dreadstar legacy justice.

Look for new readers to jump on board. In this time of low advance-orders, there could easily be far too few copies of **Dreadstar** #1 out there when the book comes out. As new readers jump on and old readers get back into **Dreadstar** watch for **Dreadstar** back-issues to go up.

Remember, you heard it here first.

Claremont

(ALMOST a Top Pick of the Month)

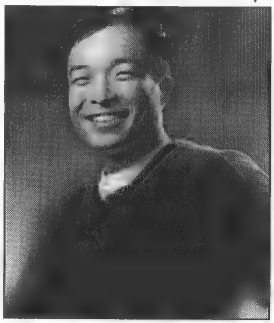
As regular **Vantage** readers know, we keep a close eye on Chris Claremont. This is the guy who made **X-Men** into one of the longest running comics success stories ever. He's only recently left the **X-Men** and has been flittering around from project to project. When he finally settles down, **Vantage** will be there, ready to pounce.

"When he finally settles down, Vantage will be there, ready to pounce."

For now Claremont is writing a three-part **WildC.A.T.S.** story for Image/Homage studios. What's really special about the first installment, **WildC.A.T.S.** #10, is that Claremont uses this book to introduce his "Huntsman" character.

The Huntsman is the sole property of Chris Claremont and sources close to Homage Studios indicate to Vantage that this powerhouse writer is now seriously considering writing a series for Image featuring the Huntsman as the main character! This would be a MAJOR DEVELOPMENT in comics! Were the Huntsman series a sure thing, **Vantage** would make this pick a Top Pick of the Month without hesitation.

WildC.A.T.S. #10 looks like a book worth picking up. Heck, with Chris Claremont and Jim Lee at the helm, at the very least you'll get a five-star read! Due out this month.



Jim Lee

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THE MARKET CRASHES, RECOVERY UNDERWAY!

How will it affect today's new comics?

Just a couple of years ago there was an unwritten three-part rule in comics: (1) Comics published by Marvel usually would go up. (2) Comics published by DC usually would not go up. And, (3) it was next to impossible that a comic published by anyone else would ever go up.

Then, the former Editor-in-Chief of Marvel Comics formed an innovative new company called Voyager. This company produced Valiant Comics—high-quality books with a tightly interlocking universe. They put behind it a strong marketing campaign and considerable talent.

People were skeptical. Everyone knew that if it wasn't Marvel or DC, it wasn't going to go anywhere.

Although Vantage was not being published at the time, we knew this company would be a winner, and it was. Valiant took off, with more new collectors jumping on board each month. The books shot up in value and the whole thing spread like wildfire — once it was established that Valiant books COULD gain value, it was as though the dam had been broken. The fans went wild.

The dam, however, had not been broken just for Valiant. Image Comics, an association of comic book creators who had banded together to form their own company, started to enjoy tremendous success. Indeed, stores started ordering many Image titles even heavier than the top Marvel books!

It looked like a big, growing, fun party . . . fandom was going nuts, the back-issues were going up . . . new people were entering comics . . . and then it all fell apart.

Since it seemed that every Valiant # would gain value, advance-orderers finally got up enough guts in the Spring of 1993 to order heavily. Orders came in strong for **Bloodshot** #1 (600,000 copies). Due to an awesome cover and vigorous demand the book STILL went up!

Advance orderers were encouraged. In late Spring they ordered 1.6 million copies of **Turok** #1. That was when they finally stepped in it. A few hours after the books arrived in stores it started to trade at a huge discount among store owners over the dealers' comic trading network. **Turok** #1 was dead on arrival, having drowned it its own huge print run.

While this was all going on, Image was running into problems of its own. The Image guys were great artists but were inexperienced at running a comics company. In the excitement, they offered a lot of comics for advance ordering but could not come through on all of the orders that came in. At the same time many new universes (Ultraverse, Comics' Greatest World, Defiance,

MARKET ANALYSIS (continued)

and others — were launched in a quick attempt to take advantage of the dam that Valiant had broken.

The result was disastrous. Image was shipping books to stores late, so that retailers didn't just get the books up to 75 days after they ordered (which is normal), they got them up to 160 days after they ordered (which was the latest that comics sold to stores could be delivered without being returnable), or later. This messed up many a store's attempt to budget their spending and sales.

"Our favorite saying here at Vantage is that history is the key to the future."

Meanwhile, even with Image's lateness problems, there were way too many new comics and universes popping up, with the result that the consumer became confused. Add the **Turok** disaster to the consumers' confusion and you have a bad situation for any market. The bottom line: You won't read about this in your hype-mag, but the comics market quietly crashed in the Fall of 1993.

To make matters worse, store owners found themselves stuck with the huge quantities of late Image comics that finally arrived—after the crash. This, along with the crash itself, hurt some shops and even closed up a few.

Why do we tell you all of this? Our favorite saying here at **Vantage** is that history is the key to the future. Only by understanding history can we understand the present and predict the future.

Today, as a backlash against lateness, new rules have been implemented reducing the time limit from about 160 days to about 100 days past the day that stores place their orders. So, for example, if your local shop orders twenty-five copies of **Vantage** #1000, we have to get it there within about 100 days, or it becomes fully returnable (something that, we are proud to say, has NEVER even come close to happening with a **Vantage** product)! Now more than ever, store owners have come to despise late companies. Many companies (like Image for example), are working hard towards improvement.

Now that we've given you all of this doom and gloom, here's a shocker for you:

Now is a great time to be a comic book investor! Comicland has entered a period of RECOVERY!! Many speculators have dropped out and print runs for comics throughout the comic industry are now VERY, VERY LOW! For example, Spawn used to sell about a million copies each month and now sells only about half that.

As the comics industry slowly recovers, many of the low print run issues coming out today will become increasingly sought after as back issues tomorrow! Today, a Valiant first issue only sells a few hundred-thousand copies! Imagine what the forces of supply and demand could do to it!

Vantage believes that the current comics recovery will be given a strong boost by several important events about to take place: (1) A Spider-Man movie is slated for production by James Cameron (of Terminator and Predator fame). (2) A new Spider-Man Saturday morning cartoon will soon be released. Cartoons from other are publishers on the way. (3) Blockbuster Video is seriously considering carrying comics in every store — this would add 6,000 outlets overnight and would bring thousands of new collectors into comics (and into regular comic shops). (4) This Summer publishers will battle for the attention of the market, but they will do so with low print runs (advance-orderers have learned to be more careful). Therefore, any summer event or universe that does well (did someone say Zero Hour?) will have the potential to do VERY WELL, as demand should severely outstrip supply.

In other words, follow the old adage, "buy low, sell high." It works in the stock market and it works in comics. Now is the time to comb the market for winners because history has shown that the market is cyclical and it WILL be back. Indeed, it is returning as we write this. prices are no longer falling, some new books are starting to gain value from the day they come out, and stores are reporting improved sales. Will you have the low-print-run books that the new collectors will be looking for this summer and beyond?

Read on, and make **Vantage** your "Recovery of 1994" handbook.

VALIANT PLANS HUGE CROSS-OVER

Valiant has a huge cross-over in the works for this summer. The summer is boom-time for comics so every publisher (including **Vantage**) will have big promotional plans for the summer of 1994.

The Valiant battle plan is called the Chaos Effect — this will be the name of a cross-over that will run through ALL VALIANT TITLES! The basic concept will be that something will not be right in the universe and Valiant's heroes must find a way to fix it. Print runs should be low, but the concept is reminiscent of their successful Unity cross-over. **Vantage** would not be surprised to see parts of this cross-over gain value.

Valiant has three new title slated to come out over the nex several months as well .**Starwatchers** (1st app: **Rai an the Future Force** #21), a ge mancer series, an Timewalker (Ivar, whose 1 app. is **Archer and Armstron** #8). Sources close to Valia indicate that the Timewalk (Ivar) will play an important pa in the cross-over.

Valiant also has a muffin in the ove called "The Year of the Visitor." Whatever is, it's going to be big and Valiant staffe have strict orders to say nothing about it anyone!

Valiant Logo TM & © 1994 Voya Communications, Inc.

MADMAN

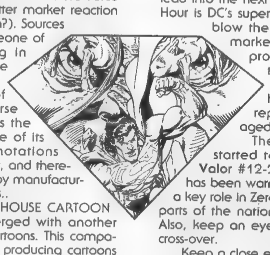
Madman from Michael Allred has taken comics by storm. While not "hot," this tale has quickly developed its own Cerebus-style following.

This month Dark Horse introduces **Madman** #1 which is sure to bring us action, romance, adventure, and yes, nice potential in the market. Due out soon.

Madman TM & © 1994 Michael Allred

VANTAGE QUICKIES

ANOTHER ULTRAVERSE EXCLUSIVE: Vantage has learned that a major artist may be doing **Prime** on a regular basis in the near future (including **Prime** #10). This artist would also do **Ultraforce**, which will be Malibu's version of **Rai** and the **Future Force** (let's just hope for a better market reaction than that old disaster, eh?). Sources indicate this artist is someone of considerable standing in comics. **Ultraforce** will be a team consisting of **Prime** and a variety of other popular Ultraverse characters. Malibu likes the name **Ultraforce** in spite of its "Future Force" connotations because it's quick, catchy, and therefore easy to push on to toy manufacturers and other such groups..



MALIBU CREATES IN-HOUSE CARTOON ABILITY: Malibu has merged with another company that makes cartoons. This company has a track record of producing cartoons that actually make it to television, a rare feat indeed. If Malibu can get the Ultraverse on Saturday mornings, watch for those low print-run early issues to really take off.

WHY DOES VANTAGE COVER MALIBU SO MUCH?: Some people have been asking us this question. Open up your price guide and look up the books we've been covering — 'Nuff said.

DOOMSDAY'S BACK: In **Superman/ Doomsday: Hunter/Prey**, a three-issue miniseries, the guy who "killed" Superman a few months back returns. It's exciting! It's what we've been waiting for! It'll be an AWESOME read!

BUT, in any other marketplace this would be a market dog. A year ago, a book like this would have been heavily ordered, with EVERYONE expecting it to be big, and while all copies might sell out at cover price, the book could never go up. Why? Because it already is up — with a built-in cover price of $4.95! With a $4.95 cover price and a heavy run, demand would have to be intergalactic to push this book up in value beyond its original cost.

However, in today's market-place, a market where people have learned caution and where many were just burned by the high-cover-priced Deathmate books, orders could come in relatively low. We're not saying Superman/Doomsday is gonna be rare — but it could come in just low enough to gain value. It's possible, especially if Doomsday ties into Zero Hour or some other future project. We'll keep you posted.

ZERO HOUR: Hey, do we know how to lead into the next paragraph or what? Zero Hour is DC's super-secret project that could blow the lid off of this summer's marketplace IF they handle it properly. Current plans are that Zero Hour will be a cross-over where Earth's heroes will team up to repair the universe's damaged timeline.

The timeline has already started to unravel in books like **Valor** #12-20. For months Vantage has been warning that Valor could play a key role in Zero Hour and prices in some parts of the nation are already going up. Also, keep an eye on DC's Judgment Day cross-over.

Keep a close eye on DC for time anomalies and unannounced events of importance. We'll keep working on Zero Hour. Our sources at DC tell us that they may be able to provide us with much more info next issue.

BATMAN: Bruce Wayne will be returning to confront Batman this Spring. Bruce will be displeased with the way the new Batman has handled himself. Sources indicate that Wayne will not be successful in the initial confrontation which takes place in **Robin** #7, and there will be an even greater confrontation in a future Bat-book. We have unconfirmed reports that Bruce will once again become the Dark Knight.

Thus, it seems that **Robin** #7 could be a major book, setting the stage for Bruce's return as the Batman. **Robin** #7 has not been heavily promoted so that orders could be low — it may do nicely, and it should be a fun read as well.

CONAN THE ADVENTURER: No, no, no. This is not late-night TV with the guys who say Conan's name. This is a for-real title from Marvel by a for-real Conan writer (Roy Thomas, of just about everything **else** that says Conan on it) and for-real market potential. This Conan guy is cool, he doesn't take any crap, and he's got loads of followers. By Crom!, this book's another one that's not going to explode, but it should do nicely over time!

Superman TM & © 1994 DC Comics

A

VANTAGE™

PRESS RELEASE REVIEW

TIMELINE™

...Somewhere between Zero Hour™ and the Chaos Effect™...

2nd

It happens!

1st

We say: "It's gonna happen!"

3rd

Other mags say: "It happened! And we noticed! Are we cutting edge or what?"

...reading about the past and start reading about the future! Vantage contains the only serious future pick list

"Top Pick of the Month"

–Vantage on the blockbuster *Green Lantern* #48 before it came out!

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NON-SPORTS PREDICTIONS: HIDDEN PICKS

Looking for a few collectible cards? Your current best bets may be in magazines instead of foil packs!

Potential Card Picks

Collector's Sportslook #6
(May 1994)
Spider-Man Magazine #1
Star Wars: A New Hope Tin Card Set

Spider-Man on the First Marvel Cards

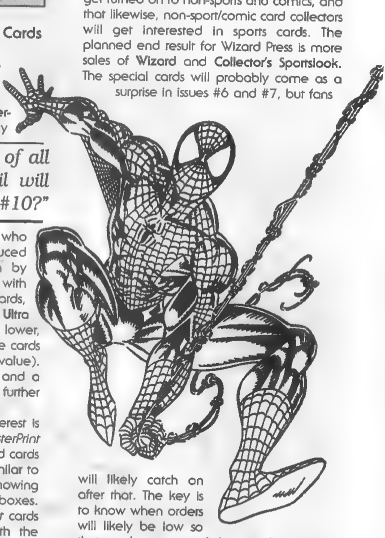
Scheduled for April release is the next set of cards from Fleer and Marvel (the first to bear the *Marvel Cards* imprint): **The Amazing Spider-Man**. The artwork is being completely handled by Mark Bagley, the artist who gave us the comics that introduced Carnage. The sample cards seen by **Vantage** reflect well on his past work with Spidey. These are premium-quality cards, but are not foil-stamped like the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** set. The initial price will be lower, which should help sales (and give the cards more potential for an increase in value). Chase cards will include holograms and a new kind of plastic card, but no further details are readily available.

The question on the lips of all Spidey collectors in April will be, "Where do I find card #10?"

What should really grab your interest is the unannounced chase set! The *MasterPrint* series appears to be a set of oversized cards that are 6-1/2 by 10 inches each, similar to the special cards that have started showing up in some of the sports card boxes. **Vantage** suspects that the *MasterPrint* cards will be packed one to a box with the **Amazing Spider-Man** cards.

The first nine cards of this unique set will be found in the regular boxes of the cards. Issue #33 of **Wizard** will contain the 11th card of the set—and it's the only place you can get one. However, the huge circulation of **Wizard** will guarantee that card #11 will be readily available. The question on the lips of all Spidey collectors in April will be, "Where do I find card #10?" Oddly enough, card #10 will only be found in a new sports card magazine—and only **Vantage** has the details!

Wizard Press recently started a new sports magazine called **Collector's Sportslook**. Wizard Press will be cross-promoting the new sports 'zine by including non-sports cards. They clearly hope that sports collectors will get turned on to non-sports and comics, and that likewise, non-sport/comic card collectors will get interested in sports cards. The planned end result for Wizard Press is more sales of **Wizard** and **Collector's Sportslook**. The special cards will probably come as a surprise in issues #6 and #7, but fans will likely catch on after that. The key is to know when orders will likely be low so that you have a good chance of seeing the special cards go up.



It's also important to know that **Collector's Sportslook** #6 was solicited *with no mention* of the *Spider-Man MasterPrint* card. Orders for this magazine by comic dealers should be next to nothing, and the supply from the

Spider-Man ™ & © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

sports card stores will not reflect the demand that comic card collectors should generate. **Collector's Sportslook #6 has potential to be seriously under-ordered.** Issue #7, which will have an exclusive chromium card of Jim Lee's Zealot (the first of a series of chromium cards that will be coming out monthly), could also do nicely. Of course, you have a chance to pick up a few copies now that **Vantage** has let you in on the secret!

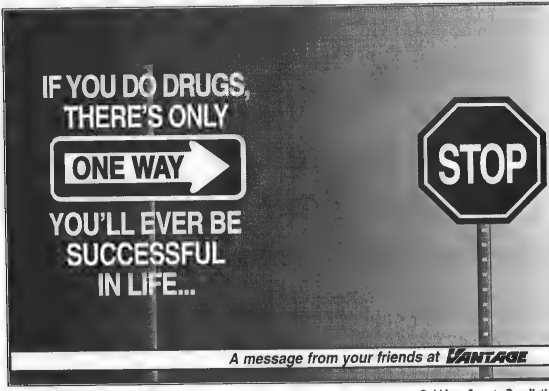
Spider-Man and X-Men ™ & © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc

Spider-Man in His Own Magazine

With minimal fanfare, Marvel launched a new magazine last month that is aimed at younger readers. It contained short Spider-Man and X-Men comic stories, mail, reader illustrations, mazes, etc. Oh yes, and it also contained an uncut sheet of four **Fleer Ultra X-Men** cards and a uncut sheet of fou **Amazing Spider-Ma** cards. After payin about $2 for th **Spider-Man Magazine**, you ca take it home and ea ily remove the unc card sheets, cuttin them apart from eac other. Bag and boar them and they se quickly at shows for $ to $5.

A Sports Magazine from Marvel?

In addition to th new **Spider-Man Magazine**, Marvel al slipped in another new magazine "whe pro football, comics, and pop culture co lide": **Pro Action #1**. Outside is a $3 cov price; inside is an uncut card sheet of Cyclop Storm, Gambit and Wolverine. The cards a not those in the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** set, b



rather four cards that apparently will never appear in any set (the backs of the cards have the characters on football fields)! The cards are foil-stamped, and the uncut sheet easily attracts attention at shows. There is also a companion sheet of four football cards which you may be able to trade or sell as well. Also bound in to the magazine is a sixteen-page comic which is identified as **The Uncanny X-Men** #1. Even though the cover is paper instead of the slick covers readers are accustomed to, this could easily turn into something that die-hard X-Collectors need to own. Marvel thoughtfully designed the comic for removal from the magazine, even using several extra staples that are only in the comic.

It's in the Stars

The new Star Trek cards from SkyBox imply that several more will be available at a future Star Date. **Star Trek: The Next Generation Episodes–Series One** cards could lead to a set for each year of the series. New techniques are being used to get the highest quality photographs possible from the television show onto cards. You might want to get an early look at these cards when they come out (especially the chase cards) to decide if you want to stock up on them.

Topps is releasing **Star Wars Galaxy II**; a 135-card set that includes some of the comic book art Marvel produced—from comics whose prices have started to accelerate rapidly. Walt Simonson did the artwork for the six spectra-etch chase cards. Vantage can't help but be impressed that the six new cards attach to the six cards from the first set to continue a large picture. The chase cards from the first set are still in demand, and it is likely that there will be instant demand for the second set of chase cards from collectors who want to "complete" the picture.

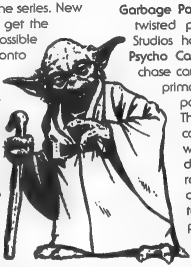
Yoda, Star Wars and related logo ®,™ & © 1994 Lucasfilm, Ltd.

Vantage can't help but be impressed that the six new cards attach to the six cards from the first set to continue a large picture.

The last star-set is **Star Wars: A New Hope Tin Card Set**. Similar to a set of Elvis cards done in 1993, this set of twenty metal cards comes in a collector tin from Metallic Images. Since these cards are only sold as a set, they may appeal to a different (potentially larger) market—those who read the books, love the movies, and don't have a clue that comics and cards exist. There will be only 49,900 sets, and they should initially sell for just a few dollars more than a box of cards.

The Speculative Corner

Did you hate the **Garbage Pail Kids**? Do you remember the twisted pleasure of sick jokes? Psycho Studios hopes so, for they are offering **Psycho Cards**. A 66-card set with a few chase cards thrown in, this should appeal primarily to 12-14 year old boys; their parents are sure to hate them. There will be only 4,000 ten-box cases, and if these catch on the way the **Garbage Pail Kids** cards did, these cards should appreciate rapidly. Just be aware of the downside: if the marketplace is too mature for sick jokes, you'll probably be able to buy boxes for a buck or two just in time for Christmas.



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PUBLISHERS: HELP US TO HELP YOU!

Vantage can be an invaluable resource to publishers in three great ways...

1. Your press releases can be published in **Vantage: Press Release Review** at no charge.

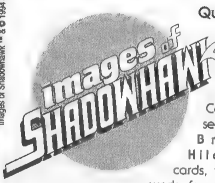
2. Your advertising will reach the most important people in comics - retailers, show dealers, wholesalers, and the most serious collectors!

3. Your questions about how you can attract the attention of the market to build sales and readership can be answered. **Vantage** has given advice to all types of publishers, both large and small. Contact us for some free and confidential advice.

VANTAGE is the place to be!

Images of Shadowhawk™ & © 1994 Jim Valentino

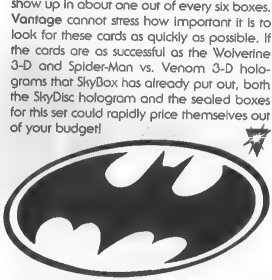
Quick Notes



The art card wars continue! In this corner, Comic Images serves up **The Brothers Hildebrandt** cards, featuring artwork from Star Wars, fairy tales, Dungeons & Dragons, and more (they did the nine-card chase set from the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** card set). In the other corner, Friedlander presents Keith Parkinson cards, featuring the best of his artwork from TSR (fantasy and Dungeons & Dragons again). So far the marketplace is absorbing all the art cards, possibly because they have expanded the marketplace.

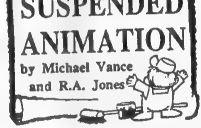
The first cards offered directly from Image are due out as well: the **Images of Shadowhawk**. The prism cards from the first **Shadowhawk** set are still actively sought after, and this set offers seven holofoil cards (although putting an average of four in a box should make them easier to come by and less expensive).

The first comic cards for **Batman** in over twenty-five years are coming from SkyBox. While the five spectra-etch cards will no doubt prove popular, the true hope for this set is the new "SkyDisc" holograms which will show up in about one out of every six boxes. **Vantage** cannot stress how important it is to look for these cards as quickly as possible. If the cards are as successful as the Wolverine 3-D and Spider-Man vs. Venom 3-D holograms that SkyBox has already put out, both the SkyDisc hologram and the sealed boxes for this set could rapidly price themselves out of your budget!



Batman logo ™ & © 1994 DC Comics

COMICS ARE FOR READING FIRST



Art packed his grandfather's suitcase — the one his Grandfather used to come to America — and departed for Italy. Art was disillusioned by memories of Vietnam, isolated by self-pity, and open only to Ian, his oldest friend. Art left in search of...

Was he in search of America? Himself? God?

No, no, Art was merely in search of Shirley.

Art, with Ian, found their teen sweetheart Shirley about to take a nun's permanent vows. They also found Italy to be breathtaking in its beauty and completely alien to the American lifestyle. These were easy discoveries, but the truth that lay beneath the surface of America or Italy or life was not so painlessly won.

Life is never as we want it. Neither was Shirley.

This is the meat of **In Search of Shirley**, a graphic novel in the truest sense. Divided into two volumes and written and drawn by the Swiss artist Cosey, **In Search of Shirley** really is a mainstream novel in pictures.

Praising **In Search of Shirley** is not without its own pain. It's difficult to criticize a jewel awash in an ocean of superhero melodrama. It's difficult to fault distinctive art, great visual storytelling, adept characterization, and realistic plotting. But there is a subtle weakness in pictures, whether they are worth a thousand words or not.

Pictures alone cannot communicate deep, complicated human relationships as well as prose can.

In Search of Shirley may leave you in search of more — of some sort of climax absent from real life and this book, but so important to literature.

Read it anyway. This is good stuff. Brief, nonsexual nudity, a smattering of gutter language, and several sexual situations do nothing to weaken a heartfelt recommendation.

In Search of Shirley / 1 & 2 / 48 & 54 pages / $9.95 each from NBM publishing / available in comics shops.

MINIVIEW: **Mr. Lizard** #1/ Now Comics. He's suave, dashing, sophisticated, brain dead. Macho absurdity, hot babes, and this raunchy reptile make rib-tickling reading in this daring spoof. Recommended.

TOP READING PICK OF THE MONTH

THE SANDMAN: PRELUDES & NOCTURNES

Well, here you are flipping through some mag and you see it again — "You should read **Sandman**, read **Sandman**, read **Sandman**!"

You're thinking, "Everyone always says read Sandman. But, (with a whine) I don't want to read about some guy on the beach building sand castles. Sound's dumb. I'll pass."

Well, oh Vantagite, pass no longer. Today is the first day of the rest of your life and now is the time to resolve to actually read this thing that everyone wants to cram down your throat.

A perfect place to start is the graphic novel, **Sandman: Preludes & Nocturnes**. It's got a nice glossy cover, so it should go down nice and easy.

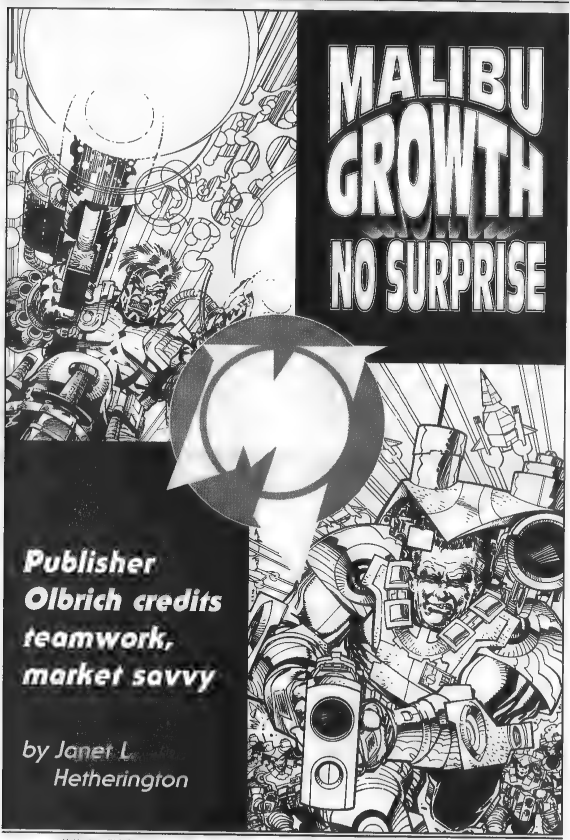
So what the heck is **Sandman** anyway? Well, you know how the Sandman in fairy tales is this guy who has something to do with dreams? That's the guy!

. . . with a twist. Neil Gaiman's **Sandman** is no fairy tale — this guy is pretty much a god — and he's in charge of the dreams department. In this graphic novel he gets captured by mortals using magic and is forced to live in a glass box for seventy years.

"I don't want to read about some guy on the beach building sand castles!"

The Sandman finally escapes and spends the rest of the graphic novel trying to repair the damage that's been done to him and to his world of dreams during his captivity.

It's fascinating to see Sam Kieth's artwork before he got hot. And the story is, well, captivating. Read the graphic novel, or anything of the Sandman persuasion. **Vantage** recommends all of it.



MALIBU GROWTH NO SURPRISE

Publisher Olbrich credits teamwork, market savvy

by Janet L. Hetherington

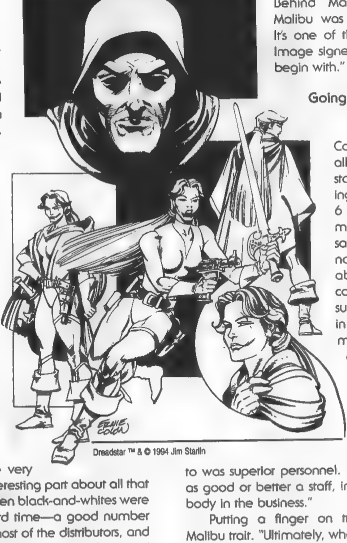
Malibu logo ™ & © 1994 Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc. Warstrike and Star Slammers ™ & © 1994 Walt Simonson

alibu Ultraverse... Star Trek: Deep Space Nine... Mortal Kombat... Rock-it Comics... World Sports Entertainment... and now *Bravura,* a creator-owned line of comic books. And what creators they are— Jim Starlin, Howard Chaykin, Dan Brereton, Steven Grant, Dan Jurgens, Gil Kane, and Walt Simonson— big names to make a big impact in today's highly-competitive comics marketplace.

Just two years shy of a decade old, *Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.* seems to have found its place in the sun. The little comics company that started at the end of the black-and-white boom-and-bust in 1986, and grew into the firm that launched *Image Comics,* is a going concern. Publisher Dave Olbrich credits hard work by knowledgeable people, combined with insightful market planning, for its continuing growth.

"We came in at the very tail end of the boom, so primarily we got the bust part," recalls Olbrich, who, as one of the four founding Malibu members, has been with the company from the very beginning. "The interesting part about all that is, at that time—when black-and-whites were having a really hard time—a good number of the publishers, most of the distributors, and all of the retailers were saying that if we tried to make it in black-and-white, we would die. We didn't. We had a better system, we had better personnel, we had better books...and we were able to publish black-and-whites for a very long time at a considerable profit."

Malibu comics are definitely more colorful these days; current imprint **Rock-it Comics** features fully-painted pages while former fledgling **Image Comics** defined state-of-the-art computerized coloring. "We've published color books off and on for quite a few years," comments Olbrich. "What people seem to forget is that prior to us launching Image in 1992, we were the number three publisher for four different months in 1991. Behind Marvel and DC, Malibu was number three. It's one of the reasons that Image signed on with us to begin with."



Dreadstar ™ & © 1994 Jim Starlin

Going with the Flow

Malibu Comics—including all current titles—started 1994 holding approximately 6 percent of the market. Olbrich says that there is no big secret about how the company could survive and grow in a tough economy. "Ultimately, it didn't come down to specific marketing strategies," he says. "What it specifically came down to was superior personnel. I think we've got as good or better a staff, in total, than anybody in the business."

Putting a finger on trends is another Malibu trait. "Ultimately, what got us this far is being flexible—recognizing market trends, recognizing marketing opportunities, recognizing what the fans want...what the retailers

want...and being able to act accordingly—and staying flexible," Olbrich explains.

Malibu also stays visible. While other comic companies may tend to concentrate on direct distribution into comics shops, Malibu is taking advantage of both newsstand and comic shop exposure. "It took us a long time to find exactly the right newsstand deal that we could make money at," says Olbrich, "and I think we watched very carefully the mistakes of our competitors. When we decided to go onto newsstand, we knew exactly what we were getting into, what to expect, and how to make it profitable."

Sludge ™ & © 1994 Malibu Comics

"Right now, the publisher that wants to expand his reader base has to go to where the people are...go to those high-traffic spots...and that's what the newsstand is for," Olbrich continues. "But," he adds, "the newsstand can't provide service. They provide visibility and high traffic. What you get in a comic book store is service for the customer. So that's why we have, and have had for years, a regular program of running advertising in our publications that say, 'If you bought this comic on the newsstand, you should go and check out your local store.'"

Jump on Now!

Malibu is also reaching new customers through its innovative series of television commercials, encouraging potential Ultraverse readers to **Jump on Now!** Creative Director Tom Mason explains, "The **Jump on Now!** campaign is twofold. All the books solicited for January have two-page origins in the back to bring new readers up to speed. We have devised a marketing campaign called **Jump on Now!** because now is the time for people to get with the program...to get with the books. So, if you've missed a couple of books, it doesn't matter, because the January books will bring you up to speed."

The campaign is designed to make readers more familiar with the whole Ultraverse line as well. "Fans are not going to see the Prototype origin in the back of *Prototype*," Mason notes. "We're going to mix them up. They're going to find the origin of some other character."

And readers can find even more Ultraverse origins in a special Malibu comic book released at the end of January. "We are releasing, for the fans, a special 99-cent origins comic...with George Pérez, Barry Windsor-Smith, Mike Zeck, Dan Jurgens, Chris Brown...and other good people," Mason says enthusiastically.

Ripfire ™ & © 1994 Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

"In addition, the whole thing is being supported by television commercials, which began airing on January 24," Mason says. Those commercials appeared on CNN, the Sci-Fi Channel, Comedy Central, and MTV. "It's very similar to when we launched the Ultraverse in June of last year," Mason adds. "We're also supporting it with bus shelter posters in major cities—Phoenix, Philadelphia, New York, Tulsa, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles."

Ultraverse Premiere

And what will new Ultraverse converts find in books coming out in the summer of 1994? "Obviously, one of the biggest things we're doing is *Ultraverse Premiere*, which is a really interesting, exciting concept for us," says publisher Olbrich. "It's a comic book that 'floats' from one issue to the next. In March, the first issue of *Ultraverse Premiere* is going to be an anthology book, spotlighting underused characters, showing separate adventures of title characters, and introducing new characters. That's what a good anthology is for—to explore parts of the Ultraverse that you're not necessarily going to get to in the regular book."

"But," Olbrich continues, "the interesting thing is the first issue of *Ultraverse Premiere* appears as the flip book for *Rune #3*. And then every month, a different Ultraverse regular title will have this bonus for the readers. So *Ultraverse Premiere* will move from book to book to book, and you'll be able to get a double-sized issue every so often of your favorite book. That will give us the chance to present the regular *Prime* readers, or the regular *Mantra* readers, with additional stuff about the Ultraverse. And while the original book is $1.85, a complete double-sized issue is only $3.50."

SHOULD I WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU CONSIDER WHAT I'M DOING TO YOU MORE EVIL?
SPEAKING TUCKER'S LANGUAGE, I'M SURE I CAN BE MORE EVIL. I'M PRETTY SURE I'M PRETTY MUCH EVIL ALREADY.
IF IT IS, THEN MATTER OF FACT, I'M GOING TO EVISCERATE LINDA SCHWEIKERT.
SOLVED. NOW.
BUT I'M NOT DEVOURING MY SOUL!!
BOOM!

Boneyard ™ & © 1994 Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

As for Malibu's Ultraverse in general, Olbrich says that Malibu is still evaluating the overall success after its initial introduction. "So far, it's hard to tell—we're still releasing so many #1s," says Olbrich. "Certainly the ones that were released the earliest—*Prime*, *Hardcase*, *Strangers*, *Freex* and *Mantra*—are the ones that are building the most loyal readership...at least right now, because they've had the longest opportunity to be in front of the fans. So, we expect that over the long haul, as *Prototype* and *Firearm* and *Flood* and *Nightman* get further up into their issues, that those books will all start to build momentum."

Readers will also be seeing a few more additions to the Ultraverse this year. "The plan is to keep the number of new titles released to a minimum throughout '94," Olbrich comments, "because we grew very fast throughout '93, and now is the time for us to concentrate on the books we've got out there and build readership in the existing titles. There will be two new titles between now and August...but that's all," he adds.

'Breed ™ & © 1994 Jim Starlin

Brave New Bravura

While the Ultraverse may be expanding on a small scale in 1994, Malibu's creator-owned line, *Bravura*, began the year with a big bang. "The first issue appeared January 14—Jim Starlin's *'Breed*," says Creative Director Tom Mason. "We got the whole thing going with conversations between our publisher Dave Olbrich and Harris Miller, the lawyer who represents all of the Bravura founders," Mason recalls. "Harris had been talking to his clients, and it turned out that each of them had a project they had been working on that didn't have a publisher yet. Harris suggested that they be taken as a group to Malibu, and he approached Dave, and when Dave approached the rest of us, we were all very receptive."

"We'd had a number of good dealings with a lot of the creators involved with Bravura prior to this," Mason continues. "Howard Chaykin had done some work for us. We've always been talking with Walt Simonson; in fact, he designed some of the original Ultraverse characters a year-and-a-half ago. So it wasn't like a bunch of strangers coming together."

While the projects are creator-owned, the name *Bravura* is trademarked by Malibu Comics. Mason says, "We went down a list that, in retrospect, seems like a thousand different names to come up with one that wasn't taken by somebody else, or that we could all agree on, or that didn't sound silly. *Bravura* actually came out of a conversation with Howard Chaykin, where he was trying to describe the kind of work that he does. He said that his work is 'bravura pulp fiction,' and that sort of got trimmed away to just *Bravura*."

Even with the addition of *Bravura* to the Malibu line, Mason says that the company will still be producing the same number of titles overall—between 20 and 25 per month. "What you're going to find is that we are starting to weed out titles at the bottom of our sales, to make room for the new ones that we're bringing on," Mason states. "That way, we're not glutting the market, or adding beyond our means, or just expanding wildly. It's the same thing that we did when we went to the Ultraverse."

Power & Glory ™ & © 1994 Howard Chaykin

Rock-it Launch

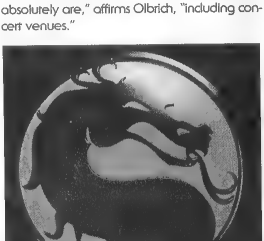
Another brand-new line brought on by Malibu in 1994 is *Rock-it Comics*, currently the only **authorized** rock-and-roll comic books being produced. "We're very proud of the way the books look," comments publisher Dave Olbrich. "I think it's rock-and-roll comics done right; I think that the tie is directly to the artist and the fact they are getting comic books the way they want them to look."

Choosing the groups to profile in *Rock-it Comics* is no easy task. "It's a pretty tricky process," confesses Olbrich. "We're working with some regular music promoters who suggest some groups to us who might be appropriate. We obviously go through our list of artists whom we think will sell well. So there's a lot of different input. Eventually, the proposals will go to an internal Malibu editori-

al board, who will then evaluate the marketability of whatever is being suggested."

Once the books are chosen and produced, there is still work to be done. "The trick now is to see what is going to happen both within the direct market and without." Olbrich says. "Obviously, this is another opportunity for retailers to attract non-traditional customers. If the retailer would take the stuff that we sent them to promote *Rock-it*, or get a little inventive themselves and put a big reproduction of the cover of *Metallica* or something in their front window, who knows what kind of customers they would get that they normally wouldn't get."

Malibu is also placing these books in non-traditional outlets, like record stores. "We absolutely are," affirms Olbrich, "including concert venues."



Mortal Kombat ®,™ & © 1994 Midway Manufacturing Company

Artistic License and Accountability

Malibu is also publishing other licensed comic books, following the success of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. "There is *Mortal Kombat*, the most violent video game according to the Congressional Report," confides Creative Director Tom Mason. "The team on that is Charles Marshall and Patrick Rolo, and that is scheduled for the summer of '94. We are also doing a *Bruce Lee* comic book," he adds. "That's going to come out at the same time as *Mortal Kombat*—a sort of a one-two-punch thing. Mike Baron is doing the scripts and Val Mayerik is doing the artwork. Both are accomplished martial artists." In addition, Mason advises that a new *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* mini-series called "Hearts and Minds," is due out in May.

And when Malibu says May, it means May. The company has recently implemented a 30-day returnable policy for its books. Publisher Dave Olbrich says that means more pressure on the company to get the books out on time. "This cuts 30 days off of our current existing policy. We work really hard to get our books out on time," says Olbrich. "It's a visible commitment to the distributors and retailers."

ADVERTISE IN VANTAGE

Your ad will reach the most important people in comics! Our readers are people like you — the influencers and the trend setters. That's right, the people who read **Vantage: Press Release Review** are retailers, show dealers, wholesalers, and the most serious collectors!

It's so easy to advertise in **Vantage: Press Release Review** because typesetting is free! A full-page ad is only $400 and a half-page is $250 (ask about our half-price specials). Our ad deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication. Just send in your check and a clearly-written ad copy to:

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Advertising Placement
10238 West National Avenue, #166
West Allis, WI 53227

WIN A ONE-OF-A-KIND...

SIGNED BY THE VANTAGE STAFF!!!

We want you to help us spread the word about how cool **Vantage** is! Just fill out the coupon below, have your local store fill out their half, and send it in FAST! Hey, the odds are in your favor, because how many people are really going to bring this coupon back to their comic store and bug the guy behind the counter with it? If you win you'll get **Vantage: Press Release Review** #1000 signed by the **Vantage** staff FREE . . . and of course the **VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING** (what?)! Plus, you'll see your name printed in **Vantage**! Wild!

READ THE RULES: 1) Surprise, surprise, no purchase is necessary. 2) To win, you must send in an entry (coupon filled out by two people: The top gets filled out by YOU. The bottom gets filled out by the guy sitting behind the counter at your local comic shop. 3) You may send in your entry on another piece of paper, or on a photocopy of the coupon. 4) Send as many #1000 contest entries as you want, but each contestant may send in only one per store. The store does not have to carry **Vantage**. You can mail your entries to us all in the same envelope, so feel free to hit every store in your city. Entries that are not signed by an actual store employee will be disqualified. Entries that are not 100% filled out and complete will be disqualified. Contest ends 4/28/94.

YOU KNOW THE RULES. YOU KNOW THE PRIZE.
FILL OUT THIS COUPON AND YOU COULD WIN:
VANTAGE 1000 SIGNED BY EVERYONE!! PLUS THE VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING!!!

And, oh, what the heck, we'll throw in something signed and limited from Triumphant too.
And oh, sure, we'll throw in a super-rare **Hard Case** Ashcan. Oh, fudge, we'll give a limited **Prophet** Ashcan from Image to the winner too. Aren't you glad you read the fine print?
Now let that be a lesson to you, and go read the rest of **Vantage** cover to cover!

To be filled out by you:

Name:_____ Phone: ( ) _____

Address:_____ City, State and ZIP _____

To be filled out by a comic store employee, owner, or manager:

Store Name:_____ City and State:_____

"I certify that I really do work for a comic store and that I really do want my customer to win free stuff."

Employee Name:_____ Employee Signature:_____

On a scale from one to five (FIVE IS BEST), does your customer like Vantage?

___5 ___4 ___3 ___2 ___1

Your customer's favorite things about Vantage from recent issues: _____

_____

_____

Store Owner: Your customer got this coupon from Vantage: Press Release Review, the world's only mag for people who are really serious about the comic book marketplace! We don't cover what happened three Tuesdays ago. Oh no, Vantage is so well loved because we put it on the line and make for-real, logical predictions about the future of comics! We ship ON TIME (last day of each ship month) and we are really cool. Try us! You'll like us! For a free sample issue contact: 414-545-3646 (stores only).

In Previews, Look under Vantage, after Valiant!
In Advance Comics: Look under Vantage, Press Release Review, before Wizard!
In Future Comics: Look under Vantage, after Valiant!
In Up N' Coming: Look under Vantage, in the middle of nowhere!

Mail to: VANTAGE #1000 CONTEST, #166, 10238 West National Avenue, West Allis, WI 53227
This entry should be mailed in by the contestant, not the comic store! Good luck!

Congratulations to Randy Staggs of Rio Rancho, NM for winning the Vantage: Press Release Review ashcan with its cover signed by Prime artist Norm Breyfogle! Randy is now the proud owner of a prime (Oh, that's bad!) example of Norm's penmanship and the Vantage Giant Nothing! Things are going to start happening to you now, Randy!

Extreme

Press Release (pres · rl · lēs'): 1. A bulletin issued to reporters by an organization that seeks to have the information included in the bulletin reported on as news. Press Releases are major sources of information for all comic-related magazine publishers.

OFFICIAL ☆PRESS☆ RELEASE

Extreme

Reprinted below is an official press release exactly as it was faxed or mailed to Vantage. Since press releases come straight from comic publishers, they can be the most accurate, most up-to-date source of news possible. They can also be biased.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEATHMATE RED AND TROLL SELL OUT!

LIEFELD BOOKS PERFORM WELL IN LAGGING MARKET

"***Deathmate Red*** and the ***Troll*** one-shot have sold out!" says Image publisher Tony Lobito. "Anyone trying to get copies from the Image office or from Extreme Studios is out of luck." Marketing and promotions director for Extreme Studios, Matt Hawkins, continues, "We've been getting reports from all over the country that these books have completely sold out! Depending on the area you're in, demand for Rob Liefeld's Deathmate chapter has shot the asking price up to between $8 and $15!" For those fans and retailers still attempting to get copies at cover price, Matt Hawkins added one piece of advice, "Don't hold your breath!"

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Phone numbers, names, addresses and retailer pricing have been omitted on some releases.

Majestic

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Majestic

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MAJESTIC

ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEGACY #2 SHIPS...MAJESTIC LIVES

CINCINNATI, OH —Industry wide rumors of Majestic going out of business have been shattered by the shipment of *Legacy* #2. "Imagine the surprise when *Heroes Like Us* #1 ships!" comments David Alexander, Director of Sales and Marketing.

Legacy #2 catapults into action as Legacy confronts an attempted paramilitary siege of Venture Island by the superpowered faction S.T.A.T.(Security Through Acquired Talents). Their mission? To liberate Dumbstruck from Venture Island. This is when the action really begins! "This book has all the right stuff," says Sara Smith, comic collector , "super story, articulate art, concrete colors, ample action, and profound production values." (I couldn't have said it better myself.)

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Phone numbers, names, addresses and retailer pricing have been omitted on some releases.

River Group

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OFFICIAL ☆PRESS☆ RELEASE

River Group

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A MARKETING COMPANY

For Immediate Release

RIVER GROUP POSTPONES PRODUCTS, CITING OVERCROWDED MARKET

WESTPORT, Conn. – The River Group today postponed the production of the DEFIANT UNIVERSE™ Card Collection, the DARK DOMINION™ Tin Set, the SPLATTERBOWL™ I Game Highlight Tin Set, and the MULE™ vs. CHASM™ Tin Set, pointing to a market overcrowded with card products.

The four comic card products are licensed from Jim Shooter's DEFIANT™ publishing company and had been scheduled for release in early 1994.

"We're sorry to disappoint those who have ordered any of these products, but we believe it is prudent to postpone our products given that we are in a slower business growth cycle and that there currently exists an excess amount of card products," said Dan Shedrick, The River Group's chief executive officer.

"Strategically, we believe that our dealers, retailers and consumers will benefit from our decision to reduce our schedule of products at this time," Shedrick said. "The four limited-edition comic card products will be resolicited in the spring and early summer, when market conditions will benefit our customers."

SPLATTERBOWL I and MULE vs. CHASM are special collector tin products that were to have gone on sale in January. The DEFIANT UNIVERSE Card Collection was targeted for release in February, and the DARK DOMINION tin set was scheduled for March.

The River Group has released the PLASM Zero Issue™ card set, the WARRIORS OF PLASM Zero Issue Premium Edition Tin Collection, the WARRIORS OF PLASM Special Edition™ Tin Collection, the DARK DOMINION™ Zero Issue set and The SPLATTERBOWL I Preview Tin set. All the collections are based on DEFIANT titles and characters.

-xxx-

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OFFICIAL ☆PRESS☆ RELEASE

Valiant

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VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS INC.

VALIANT COMICS APRIL 1994 SOLICITATION

Valiant Lead Item

SECRET WEAPONS™ #11
Maurice Fontenot, Peter Grau, and Joe Rubinstein
$2.50/$3.40 Canadian

Featuring Bloodshot
A new look! A new creative team! A new direction! *Secret Weapons* takes a new direction as Bloodshot leads an inexperienced team of operatives into the dangerous world of superheroics. The character designs are hot! The story is hot! The art is fantastic! This new team operates in complete secrecy, so details of the Secret Weapons, their identities, and powers are being kept TOP SECRET until the title ships. This issue will ship in brown envelope marked TOP SECRET, EYES ONLY. *Secret Weapons* #11 will also ship in a 50-count counter dump and will be supported by an in-store poster and heavy advertising.

April Highlights:

BLOODSHOT™ YEARBOOK #1
By Kevin VanHook and Michael·Bair. Painted cover by Stu Suchit.
$3.95/$5.35 Canadian
Shipping from Ronalds

While stopping a mob-related drug deal, Bloodshot is caught in the explosion of a briefcase bomb. Shell-shocked and seriously wounded, he finds shelter in the home of a beautiful woman who hides a terrible secret. Will love turn to tragedy? Can Bloodshot run away from his past? Will either survive the treachery of those who would oppose their escape? There's loads of double-barreled action in a love story told the Valiant way.

HARBINGER FILES: HARADA #1
By Bob Layton & Fred Pierce, Dave Cockrum and Gonzalo Mayo
$2.50/$3.40 Canadian

Think of it as *Harada* #0. This is the story of the bad guy who has made things tough all over the Valiant Universe. Harada, a man with nearly limitless power and wealth, even Sting couldn't stop him. What made Harada so ruthless? When did he learn how his powers worked and how to control them? Was he always a nasty fellow? All these questions and more are answered in this linchpin issue. This pivitol book takes place after the plane crash in *Solar, Man of the Atom* #3 and shows how Harada survived that crash.

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VANTAGE VIEWPOINTS

10238 West National Ave, #166, West Allis, WI 53227

In honor of the mail you are about to send us, we'd like to present you with a really bad poem:

Vantage readers will soon send mail,
we know they're cool and they won't fail.
If you don't write soon we will scream,
and this letter col will be but a dream.
So send us mail and you'll get Bloodshot too
plus the Giant Nothing (owned by few).
Write us now and we'll be so happy
or don't and we'll feel just crappy.

Tell us what you think of:

1) The Ultraverse commercials.
2) Our poem.
3) Prices in your area.
4) How your comics take up too much space.
5) Your favorite magazine (take a wild guess who we're thinking of).
6) Anything else that floats your boat.

We can't write back, but we read everything and we'll print what you have to say, space permitting! Write to:

Vantage Viewpoints
10238 West National Ave, #166
West Allis, WI 53227

SPECIAL!

WIN A GOLD BLOODSHOT #0 AND THE VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING — JUST WRITE TO VANTAGE VIEWPOINTS BY MARCH 31st AND YOU ARE AUTOMATICALLY IN THE CONTEST!

WEAR A *REAL* T-SHIRT!

This is the shirt that says your serious about comic books. Wear a shirt that's for real. The **Vantage** T-Shirt is a high-quality silk-screened grey shirt with the awesome two-color **Vantage** logo on it. Sources indicate to **Vantage** that women will flock to you if you wear this shirt.

☐ **Yes, I want women to flock to me.**

Send me the Vantage T-Shirt right away!

Enclosed is a check or money order made out to Vantage-Golub Communications, Inc. for $13.95 (shipping and handling is free!).

Size: M__ L__ XL__

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, & ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Send to:
Vantage T-Shirt
10238 West National Ave, #166
West Allis, WI 53227

WRITERS WANTED!

Vantage: Press Release Review invites manuscripts pertaining to the interests and needs of comic book collectors, fans, readers, and dealers.

Do you have something to say that the rest of us want to hear?

When you tell people your thoughts do they say to you, "You're so weird! How do you think these things?"

Do you live underneath a giant pile of well-read comics?

Are you worried about whether the date on your checks will start with "19__" or "20__" if you order them in July of 1999?

Are you witty, intelligent, resourceful, and very handsome?

If you answered YES to these questions you'll f right in with TEAM VANTAGE and you just migh be perfect for the column we have in mind. We need a wild and wacky freelance writer t entertain and amuse us all with his bent view on life, the universe, and comics.

Send non-returnable writing samples, a paragraph about yourself or just your resume and your phone number to:

Vantage Submissions #2
10238 West National Ave, #166
West Allis, WI 53227

Hint-hint: We've seen too many good sub missions show up messy, computer pages no torn apart, hand written, etc. They didn't ge the job.

WANTED: ADVISORS!

Vantage advisors are eligible for free advertising! Join our merry crew!

For more info contact:

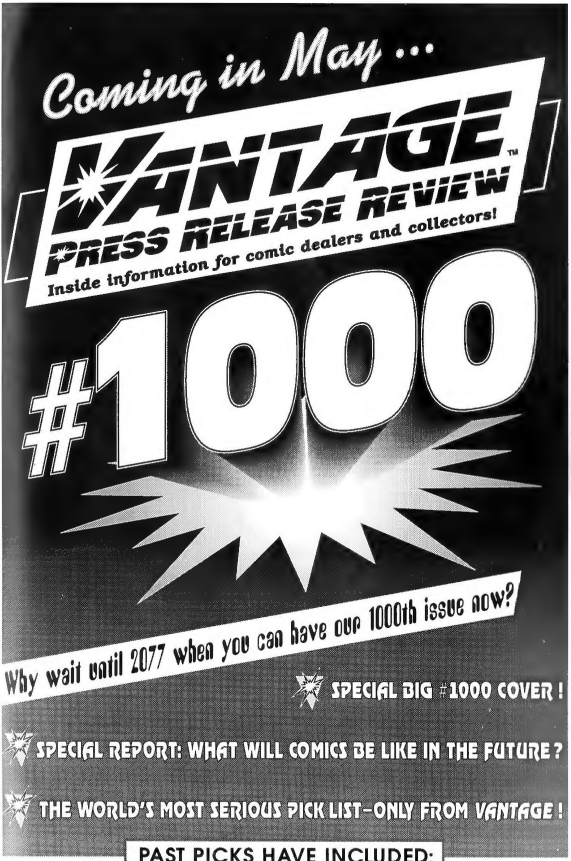
Vantage Advisors
(414) 545-3646
10238 West National Ave, #166
West Allis, WI 53227

VANTAGE: ON-LINE!

The Vantage crew is glad to announce the formation of its new on-line message center. E-mail address is as follows:

Rob Golub, Publisher: E-Mail to Robvantage@aol.com or Robvantage if a member of America Online.

Information on E-mail market guide subscriptions available on request!


Coming in May ...
VANTAGE™
PRESS RELEASE REVIEW
Inside information for comic dealers and collectors!
#1000
Why wait until 2077 when you can have our 1000th issue now?
SPECIAL BIG #1000 COVER!
SPECIAL REPORT: WHAT WILL COMICS BE LIKE IN THE FUTURE?
THE WORLD'S MOST SERIOUS PICK LIST—ONLY FROM VANTAGE!
PAST PICKS HAVE INCLUDED:
Prime #2! Green Lantern #48! Doctor Chaos #2!

THE ONLY SERIOUS FUTURE PICK LIST!

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Wild! I understand that I will get monthly issues of Vantage: Press Release Review as they come out! My copy will reach me each month at about the same time it reaches my local comic shop! I'll make check or M.O. out to VANTAGE: PRR, Sub. Dept. #P2, 10238 W. National Ave, # 166, West Allis, WI 53227.

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GET OUR PICKS WEEKS EARLIER!

Now you can get a special pre-press edition of the Vantage Market Guide before each month's advance-order deadline!* Get your comics at a discount by ordering in advance and watch your savings make up for the low Vantage subscription price! Plus, you'll get our inside back-issue tips before anyone else! This is a special RUSH service which we will make available only to a limited number of subscribers — this service DOES NOT provide you with other sections of our new mag, Vantage: Press Release Review. You will receive the Vantage Market Guide only (which is the first several pages of Vantage: Press Release Review), weeks in advance!

ool! I understand that I will get a special pre-press copy of the VANTAGE MARKET GUIDE, and that VANTAGE vill get my copy to me before the ADVANCE ORDER DEADLINE! I'll make check or M.O. out to VANTAGE MARKET GUIDE, Sub. Dept. #V2, 10238 W. National Ave, # 166, West Allis, WI 53227.

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*We reserve the right to change info or picks if new information comes in before we print the magazine. For changes other than small corrections and minor adjustments, we will keep you updated. All Vantage mail-order offers are available to Canada at no extra charge, though we cannot guarantee timeliness. Fax and E-Mail service for the Market Guide is available for the same price as a paper copy — just send in this coupon and attach a piece of paper with your fax number or E-mail address. To get both fax or mail and paper copy please include an additional 50% of the subscription fee.

FREE T-SHIRT!

I am so very wise. I have decided to subscribe to BOTH Vantage: Press Release Review and the Vantage Market Guide simultaneously. I get a free cool high-quality Vantage T-Shirt! Enclosed is a check or M.O. for $1.95 for shipping. Size: M ____ L____ XL____
Please ship to (must be filled out):

NAME: _____

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PHONE: (_____) _____ ☐ **Check here if you own or work at a comic shop.**